

## A VILLAGE STREET.

Where swaying branches lace and meet  
In canopies of green  
Above an old-time village street,  
Quiet and cool and clean,  
The mellow sunbeams filter slow  
And, interwrought with shade,  
Trace on the velvet sward below  
A shimmering brocade.

No sound disturbs the holy hush  
That wraps the silent street  
Save when at times some trill of thrush  
Drifts tremulously sweet;  
Or else, when purple twilight flings  
A gauzy veil and thin,  
Wake echoes from the tinkling strings  
Of mellow mandolin.

This is the street, serene and sweet,  
Down which in days ago  
I tripped with bare and buoyant feet  
Through dews of dusk and dawn;  
Or romped at play with comrades gay  
While some long afternoon  
Droned slowly, drowsily away  
Like bees in fields of June.

Old quiet street! the steps that learn  
The city's crowded ways  
Once more and eagerly will turn  
To scenes of other days,  
And sick of ceaseless fray and fret,  
Caecophonous and rude,  
Will seek, while eyes grow dim and wet,  
Thy restful quietude!

—Hilton R. Greer, in National Magazine.

## A RUNT BUNCH OF BANANAS

By FRANK H. SWEET

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It was only a scrawny, half-sized bunch, with irregular, misshapen fingers that had been squeezed between more thrifty bunches on adjoining stalks, but it proved the salvation of Seppina Alfano and Tony.

At the Barratas finca it was cut because the parent stalk had to be cut and removed to make room for new growth, and the machete stroke was so careless as to clip the tips of a whole cluster of fingers. That made premature decay inevitable.

Of course the bunch was thrown out, but by some inadvertent a field hand picked it up and included it with a lot that was being hurried to a vessel. There the clipped tips were unnoticed, because at the moment the bunch passed the inspector his attention was divided by a fluttering handkerchief; but he waved the bearer of the fruit toward that portion of the hold where only half-bunches of the poorest quality were placed, for even the most cursory glance showed it had but two and a half hands, with fingers of almost unmarketable ugliness.

Twenty hours later the vessel weighed anchor and left Trujillo, and by the time it passed Cape Catoche, with the end of Cuba showing as a shadow off to the right, the injured tips were in process of decay. At New Orleans the bunch was unhesitatingly discarded as being unfit for a journey north. A hundred or more other bunches were discarded at the same time, perfect fruit, except that they were a shade too ripe for a long journey. These were sold for a trifle to city fruit vendors who were waiting about the wharf with their push carts, watching for just such a chance to buy.

Petro, the Italian who had a stand in front of the St. Charles hotel, was the largest buyer; and as he started away with his fruit a wharf hand picked up the decaying runt bunch and tossed it upon the load. It was easier to do that than to carry it to the wharf edge and drop it into the water. But Petro, arrived at the hotel, threw this bunch with the litter behind his stand. His was the show position of the city, with fastidious patronage, and even the best of those unshapely and undersized fingers among his fine stock would injure trade. The other fruit was carefully wiped and placed in attractive pyramids and cones, and all the refuse of straw and stalks thrown back upon the increasing pile of litter. Then his keen, bead-like eyes went roving thriftily up and down the street.

A tramp was slouching furtively along the opposite sidewalk, apparently uncertain where to go, and evidently afraid to remain where he was. New Orleans was under a wave of reform, and the city was packed with its customary winter tramps. Every day hundreds of them were being run in and set to work, and the others were in constant dread of sharing the same hard fate. Many were leaving the city.

Twenty yards back was a young woman, not so slouching nor so ragged and disreputable looking as the first tramp, but just as furtive. Her head and face were concealed by a bit of frayed shawl. To all appearance the two were not aware of each other's presence.

Petro's thrifty eyes caught the man's furtive ones, and his hand went up in beckoning. The tramp hesitated a little and then started across the street, his gaze roving apprehensively from side to side. The woman followed his example promptly, but without looking at him. They reached Petro's stand but a few feet apart.

"You like a fine, easy job?" asked Petro, persuasively. "All my refuse-a-stuff here, banan' stalk, spoil apple an' like dat. You take my push cart an' jus' walk along, oh, so easy, an' drop him in water off the wharf. Only four, six, load, an' I give a you—see!" lifting the runt bananas so that the best cluster should show just above the edge of the stand, "one whole bunch banan'. You looka hun-gree, an' de make food for three, four day—'one whole week.' The corners of his eyes took in the woman, whose bit of shawl had suddenly dropped, showing a pretty, pinched face that expressed a pitiful mingling of hunger and longing. Even the man's eyes

narrowed and gleamed a little at the sight of the fruit. For two whole days no tramp had dared to beg in the city. "Food for one week, for two people," Petro added, convincingly. "Yes, yes, yes," the woman broke in sharply, "you must, Tony. I'll help you."

"All right," lazily, "but you needn't help. I guess I can manage it. Where's your cart, boss?"

An hour later the last load had been taken and dumped into the harbor, and Tony was back for his bananas. But as the misshapen bunch with its decayed cluster was handed out his face wrinkled doubtfully.

"Shrunk some, ain't it, boss?" he asked, suspiciously, "an' gettin' gray fast? But never mind, though," his voice suddenly changing as he got a whiff of the fragrance. "I guess we can eat even the stalk just now. Here, give it to me, quick! We'll take it down to one of the wharves where we can eat sort o' quiet like."

But before they reached the first corner there came the sound of slow, measured steps, which to their practiced ears was unmistakable. A policeman was approaching, and in another minute would swing round upon their street. Beside them was a narrow alley leading to the back entrance of a house, and the gate was unfastened. Tony's movements were sluggish only on unimportant occasions. When the policeman turned the corner they were crouching in the alley behind an ash barrel, scarcely daring to breathe.

Not until the measured steps had gone beyond hearing did they venture out. Tony was breathing heavily.

"I can't stand this much longer, Pina," he gasped. "Seven watch-dogs this day have we dodged, and by a hair's breadth. If we're caught it'll be a month, maybe two, maybe six, and with hard work, for the city, too. If it keeps on like this I'll be tempted to go to work for myself."

"Yes," the woman acquiesced, "better work for self than for city."

They had made but a few blocks toward the wharves when Tony's restless eyes caught sight of another policeman rounding a corner ahead, only one block away. And, worse yet, he turned in their direction. There was no alley near, no side street, no open doorway into which they could dodge—nothing but a garbage barrel waiting for the street cleaners, with a board leaning against it. Tony's eyes made one comprehensive sweep, and then stopped at the barrel.

"Quick, Pina. Quick! Quick!" he whispered. "Drop down your skirt, the under red one. I want it."

In an instant he had swung the board across the barrel, caught the torn red skirt which Seppina handed him, and draped it dexterously so that both the board and barrel were concealed and the folds covered their own rents. It was an ideal stand of the small, Italian type, with its covering of dirty, gray-colored cloth.

Now, help break up the bananas, Pina," he whispered, briskly. "In one-two, an' three, an' make 'em spread over the stand. We're sellin' fruit, you know."

The policeman was not yet half up the block. When he drew near Tony was shouting, cheerily: "Bananas here; bananas, only—two—cents apiece!"

The policeman looked at them rather sharply, Tony thought, though he passed on without saying anything. But as soon as he reached the next block Tony began to gather up the fruit.

"We've got to get away from here, quick," he ejaculated. "That feller's comin' back in a few minutes to ask for our stand license. I seen it in his eyes. An' it'll be worse for us than just bein' tramps. I guess we'd better be leavin' the city, though I hate to, it's such a nice place. I wanted to hang out here all winter."

"How much for your bananas?" came a voice from above. Tony started and looked up. A woman was leaning from a window.

"Why, I—I—two cents," he stammered.

"I know—I heard that. I mean for the lot?"

Tony glanced dubiously at his fruit. "There's 39," he said, slowly; "but some's spiled. I guess 50 cents."

"Very well. I'll take them. Hand them in at the door. Here's your money," and a coin rattled on the pavement at Tony's feet.

He had not thought of selling any bananas—had not wanted to, in fact. But there was no help for it now. A few minutes later he was hurrying down the sidewalk with Seppina, the 50 cents clutched in his fingers.

"S'pose we go straight an' blow this into a grub-house?" he said. But Seppina was looking thoughtful.

"Why not go and buy bananas?" she suggested. "I've seen great, big bunches sold at the wharves for less than 50 cents."

Tony stopped suddenly, then slapped his thighs. The suggestion had carried his quick mind to a great thought. "The very thing!" he cried; "an' sell 'em, too. I hate work much as anybody in this world; but we've got to do something, with the watchdogs swoopin' down on us, an' banana sellin' is almost as easy as trampin', I guess. Only we've got to go safe. You know that house where they offered us work 'tother day, an' we said we wa'n't in the workin' business? Well, we'll go back there. You can cook for a week—'you're pretty good at it, an' I'll saw their wood. A week'll give us money 'nough to buy a reg'lar straight out license, so we can snap our fingers at the watchdogs, an' we'll have some for a few bunches o' bananas. The very thing. What d' you say?"

"The very thing," Seppina repeated, her eyes bright.

## CRANKY SHOPPER PUNISHED.

A New York Incident Which the Governor of Washington Remembers with Pleasure.

Henry McBride, the governor of Washington, was talking about department stores.

"A department storekeeper in Seattle," he said, "complained to me one day about the people, in outlying sections of the city, who were always having delivered to their homes papers of pins, thimbles, finger rings and similar infinitesimal packages. He said that sometimes a two-horse team would travel a mile to carry home a half dozen shoe buttons or a skein of silk."

"Then he described a trick that an old employer of his in New York had



KICKED SPOOL INTO THE GUTTER.

once played on a woman. She was a chronic offender. Two or three times a week she would harass a half dozen salesgirls an hour or more, and finally buy, and order delivered, a paper of needles or a quarter of a yard of ribbon.

"So the man decided to make an example of her."

"One afternoon, after her usual shopping excursion, there drove up to her door a huge dray, drawn by four horses, and containing six brawny, bare-armed laborers.

"A crowd collected. It was thought an enormous safe was to be moved."

"The woman stood at her front door. The laborers laid a heavy plank from the wagon to the sidewalk, and then, with many loud grunts of effort, they rolled barrel fashion on to the plank and thence down to the street a tiny spool of cotton thread. They carried the thread painfully to the woman's doorstep, and there, after a desperate struggle, they up-ended it."

"Then they departed. The woman kicked the spool into the gutter immediately, but this action on her part only made more pleasing to the neighbors the little joke that had been played on her."

## THIS DOG LIKES TOBACCO.

He Is a Black Spaniel and Recognized as Champion Stump Shooter of Philadelphia.

Every now and then a dog is heard of that has tastes in the way of beer or other intoxicants, but the distinction of owning a tobacco-loving dog belongs to Ellis Ward, the veteran rowing coach of the University of Pennsylvania, says the Philadelphia Record. Tobacco is as repulsive to the average dog as it is to some people, and though they will stamp out or bite out a lighted cigar, a little of the leaf in their mouth causes a splutter of many minutes. But it is quite different



WAITING FOR A SNIFE.

with the little black spaniel of Ward's. When only a puppy he would chew cigar stumps with a relish, and now the habit has so possessed him that he is never so happy as when a bit of tobacco is thrown his way.

He will watch a cigar smoker with more eagerness than the "stump-shooting" urchin, ready to dash for the discarded bit. Recently the dog has developed a taste for Turkish tobacco, and a Turkish cigarette gives him exquisite pleasure. The tobacco is not only chewed, but also swallowed, yet no matter how much is consumed the dog shows no signs of illness, and he is now a particularly healthy canine.

## Nursery Hint from Far East.

The native women of the Himalaya mountains have a singular way of putting their children to sleep in the middle of the day. The child is put near a stream of water, and by means of a palm leaf or a tin scoop the water is deflected so as to run gently over the back of the child's head. The water pouring over the child's head apparently sends it to sleep and keeps it so, while the mother proceeds with her work in the fields.

## RELICS OF CHATTERTON.

Little Belongings of the Famous English Writer Sold for a Large Sum.

What an irony of fate there is in the fact that the torn, shabby little pocket book and almanac that was found lying upon the bed beside the starved and self-slain boy-poet Chatterton should now be bought by a Bristol plutocrat to be presented to that city as a treasure of costly value! But it is well for that city, which has been so criticised for her love of the material, that she should now have among her children one who, if wealthy, yet can grasp the worth of the intellectual, says the Pall Mall Gazette. This gift by Mr. George White to the Bristol museum of Chatterton's manuscripts and relics is one that will draw many to the old city that now recognizes what a genius she drove from her midst in the eighteenth century. The little pocket book, that is really an almanac, with space for notes and accounts, is all stained on one side with a brown-hued blotch, that has eaten into the paper; is it some of the poison the poor lad spilled ere taking the fatal draught? It is apparently a strong acid. The entries in this pocket book are full of paths; lists of the articles he had sent to certain papers, and the money received. An entry of "Due from others, £10 17s. 6d.," speaks volumes, and against this is "Lent 1s. 6d." From Mr. Hamilton he received £1 11s. 6d., and here again is "Lent 2s."—a trait of generosity in the poverty-stricken lad hitherto unnoticed.

The original "Account of the Family of the De Berghams from the Norman conquest to the Present Time" is here, with all the wondrous pedigree with which he fooled the concealed pewterer. This is in two copy books, in the old antique marble covers of the time. There is also a long poem on "The Death of Sir Charles Baudin," in the boy's neat, careful hand. And a curious poem, with a glossary, "The Goulers' Requiem," gowler being a user or miser. The whole collection is deeply interesting, and as a pendant is the receipt of Chatterton's sister to Cottle for £135 19s. for books sold by Longmans for her benefit. As the Bristol museum already possesses Chatterton's will and many of his manuscript poems and letters it now holds what few critics can boast of: a fairly complete memorial, in his own hand, of one of her most famous sons.

## THOSE INGENIOUS WOMEN.

Maintain the Equilibrium of Their Big Hats by Twisting Their Heads Around.

"Huh!" said Mr. Bedford, as he shoved his soup plate to one side and dallied with a cracker, "the women nowadays all have St. Vitus' dance."

"What?" chorused his wife and daughters, looking at Bedford to see if he were joking. But they saw by his severe expression that he was in earnest, says the New York Times, and Mrs. Bedford said indignantly:

"How ridiculous! Where did you hear that?"

"I didn't hear it; I saw it—I see it all the time."

"Where do you see it, then?"

"In the cars, every day. Coming up in the cars to-night there were six women sitting opposite me, and every one of them was throwing her chin out and tossing her head up and down. Some of the heads were always on the go, and the big hats they wore were dancing about like little sailboats in a stiff breeze. I tell you the pace that women live at nowadays is fast making nervous wrecks of them. I shudder when I think of the ultimate result on the race."

"Did they all have big hats on?" asked the high-school daughter, as she exchanged looks of enlightenment with mother and sister.

"Big hats? I should say they were big hats."

Three individual and disconcerting laughs greeted Bedford as the high-school girl said:

"Guess again, pater. That wasn't nervousness; it was hats."

"Hats?"

"Yes, hats. Those big hats are in a condition of unstable equilibrium, and as we women have got tired of adjusting them with our hands, we have learned to do it with a simple toss of the head. Your St. Vitus' dance will disappear with a change in the style of our head-gear. So, cheer up, pater, and enjoy your dinner."

And Bedford was so relieved that he scarcely spoke during the remainder of the meal.

Interesting, But Inexact.

"Have you any summer fiction?"

"What do you call summer fiction?" asked the pert young man at the railway news stand.

"Why—er—something that is interesting without being particular about actual facts, you know."

"Go over to the bureau of information and get a branch road time table."

—Washington Star.

## Two-Millionth Chance.

One American railroad passenger was killed for every 1,977,441 carried last year, and one injured for every 84,424 carried. With respect to the number of miles traveled, however, the figures show that 58,917,645 passenger miles were accomplished for each passenger killed, and 2,541,096 passenger miles for each passenger injured.—Engineering News.

## Fine Indian Exhibit.

At the world's fair at St. Louis there is an Indian exhibit which is one of the finest individual collections in America, and is valued at several thousand dollars. Among the features of the exhibit is an elk robe, made of elk teeth. The robe has 728 elk teeth on it, which represent 364 bull elk.

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